

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

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ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	CIAE-00	DODE-00	SRPP-00
	DS-00	EB-00	EUR-00	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00
	IO-00	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	DCP-01	NSAE-00	OIC-02
	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00
	SP-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-01
	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/010W		

-----8C5CCA 021019Z /38

FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7245
INFO NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L HARARE 005585

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR GAYLE SMITH
LONDON FOR CHARLES GURNEY
PARIS FOR BISA WILLIAMS
PASS USTR FOR ROSA WHITAKER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/02/10
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: PEACEFUL MDC RALLY, BUT CONTROVERSY OVER TSVANGIRAI'S
REMARKS

REF: HARARE 5581

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CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR MCDONALD. REASONS: 1.5 (B) AND (D).

RALLY

[1](#). (C) APPROXIMATELY 20,000 PEOPLE ATTENDED A PEACEFUL RALLY HELD BY THE OPPOSITION MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE (MDC) ON SEPTEMBER 30 TO CELEBRATE THE PARTY'S ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY. MDC MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT TENDAI BITI TOLD POLOFF THAT POLICE HARASSMENT HAD NOT BEEN AS BAD AS HE EXPECTED. HIS ONLY COMPLAINT WAS THAT POLICE ROADBLOCKS MOUNTED AROUND TOWN FOR A FEW DAYS BEFORE THE RALLY MIGHT HAVE SCARED SOME PEOPLE AWAY. ACCORDING TO BITI, RALLY PARTICIPANTS CALLED OVERWHELMINGLY FOR MASS ACTION AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT. THIS WEEK THE MDC'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE WILL DISCUSS WHAT KIND OF ACTION TO ORGANIZE AND WHEN IT WILL TAKE PLACE.

TSVANGIRAI'S CONTROVERSIAL COMMENTS

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[1](#)2. (U) BOTH THE INDEPENDENT AND GOVERNMENT PRESS QUOTED TSVANGIRAI AS DECLARING AT THE RALLY THAT "MUGABE SHOULD GO PEACEFULLY. IF HE DOES NOT, WE WILL REMOVE HIM VIOLENTLY." GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS REACTED STRONGLY, WITH POLICE SPOKESMAN WAYNE BVUDZIJENA ANNOUNCING THAT TSVANGIRAI COULD FACE ARREST AND PROSECUTION FOR ADVOCATING THE VIOLENT OVERTHROW OF THE PRESIDENT. A ZANU-PF SPOKESMAN CRITICIZED TSVANGIRAI'S REMARKS AS A "SHOCKING STATEMENT FROM A PERSON WHO

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CLAIMS TO BE DEMOCRATIC" AND VOWED THAT HIS PARTY WOULD "ANSWER VIOLENCE WITH VIOLENCE."

[1](#)3. (C) MDC CHAIRMAN ISAAC MATONGO SAT BESIDE TSVANGIRAI AT THE RALLY. HE TOLD POLOFF ON OCTOBER 2 THAT TSVANGIRAI HAD MEANT THAT
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PRESIDENT MUGABE SHOULD GO PEACEFULLY BUT IF NOT, ZIMBABWEANS, WHO ARE FED UP WITH THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC DECLINE AND POLITICAL INSTABILITY, WOULD FORCE HIM TO GO. THE MDC, TSVANGIRAI HAD IMPLIED, WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO CONTAIN PEOPLE IF MUGABE CONTINUED TO HOLD ON TO POWER. MATONGO EMPHASIZED THAT THE MDC PRESIDENT HAS RESISTED AND WOULD CONTINUE TO RESIST CALLS FROM MDC SUPPORTERS TO RESORT TO VIOLENCE AGAINST THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT. THE GOZ, MATONGO SAID, WAS TWISTING TSVANGIRAI'S WORDS IN ORDER TO HAVE AN EXCUSE TO CRACK DOWN ON HIM AND THE OPPOSITION PARTY.

COMMENT

[1](#)4. (C) AT THE SEPTEMBER 30 RALLY, TSVANGIRAI APPARENTLY GOT CAUGHT UP IN THE EXCITEMENT OF THE MOMENT AND SAID SOMETHING THAT COULD BE MISINTERPRETED BY THOSE WHO SEEK TO DO SO. ALTHOUGH WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT TSVANGIRAI IS COMMITTED TO THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS AND THE CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT THROUGH PEACEFUL, DEMOCRATIC MEANS, HE HAS

GIVEN A GOVERNMENT SALIVATING FOR A CHANCE TO LOCK HIM UP AN EXCUSE
TO DO SO WITH A VENEER OF LEGALITY. POLICE SAY THEY ARE STUDYING
HIS SPEECH TO DETERMINE IF THERE IS JUSTIFICATION FOR BRINGING
CHARGES AGAINST HIM. MEANWHILE, WE WILL STAY IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH
THE MDC AS THE PARTY DEVELOPS ITS PLANS AND TIMETABLE FOR MASS
ACTION. ADDITIONALLY, THE AMBASSADOR WILL CONTINUE TO URGE
TSVANGIRAI TO ACT IN A MEASURED WAY AND EXERCISE RESTRAINT. END

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COMMENT.

MCDONALD

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